

# California GARDEN

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APRIL - MAY

Vol. 54, No. 2

1963

*How To Enter Your Prize Bloom in a Flower Show*

The Big  
Show-Off

## ORCHIDS

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Three Varieties in  
Your Backyard

## ROSES

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Andersen, Walter, Nursery.....	Page 4	Exotica Nursery .....	Page 29
Bali Hai Restaurant.....	Page 7	Garnet Avenue Nursery.....	Page 27
Bamboo Tree, The.....	Page 7	Hillside Nursery .....	Page 26
Bennett's Garden Center .....	Page 25	Hospitality Hostess .....	Page 26
Broadway Florists .....	Page 28	Johnson Rose Nursery.....	Page 25
Cafe Del Rey Moro.....	Page 28	Lessar Cactus Garden.....	Page 23
California Garden .....	Page 6	Milorganite, Butler's Mill.....	Page 26
Carolyn Beauty Shop.....	Page 28	Mission Hills Nursery.....	Page 28
Charles Hair Stylists.....	Page 8	Presidio Nursery .....	Page 28
Coleman, Curtis Co., Realtors.....	Page 8	Quon Mane, La Jolla.....	Page 4
Coles, John, Book and Craft Shop.....	Page 29	Rainford Flower Shop.....	Page 6
Comstock Dahlia Gardens.....	Page 27	Rosecroft Gardens .....	Page 7
Culligan Soft Water.....	Page 4	San Diego Gas and Electric Co.....	Page 2
De Haan's Shoreline Nurseries.....	Page 26	Suburban Savings and Loan Ass'n.....	Page 8
Eugene Cooper Studio.....	Page 28	Truly Nolen Pest Control.....	Page 8
		Volz Point Loma Pharmacy.....	Page 6

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# CALIFORNIA GARDEN

APRIL-MAY, 1963  
VOL. 54, NO. 2

## Remember your April-May garden chores

**G**ARDENERS will be breathless trying to keep up with their April chores.

Near the coast, if new growth has started on plants that were frosted, they may be cut back . . . inland gardens better wait until May. Trees that have flowered and shrubs, such as quince, leptospermum, heather, mock orange, pyracantha and zylosma, to mention only a few, flower on new wood so prune them now. This is especially true of hibiscus. Nandina will prosper if old canes are removed close to the ground. Geraniums will take a heavy cutting back as they are such vigorous flowers.

Martha Washingtons are about to bloom, but they may be pruned lightly. If the short cuttings are planted in small pots they will flower and make roots too—so accommodating. Partial shade for these in warm regions.

The pelargonium family which also includes ivy and scented geraniums give more bloom over a longer period than most plants. To encourage flowers rather than leaves always use a fertilizer low in nitrogen for members of this genus.

### WEEDS ABOUND

When the garden is cleaned up, try to keep it that way. This is weed time. Hoe them out and cover the ground with a thick mulch of compost, wood shavings or fir bark. The latter in small lump size is very good as it has an acid reaction. A mulch up to six inches deep will smother the weeds and conserve moisture but be sure water penetrates the soil beneath the mulch.

### APHIDS ACTIVE, TOO

Aphids are very active in the spring. Water will knock off some of them but they should be kept down with a spray of malathion at least once a week. Red spider is prevalent, too, especially on pyracanthas, junipers and other shrubs. Control with the same spray as for aphids. Some plants, like verbenas and zinnias, are subject to mildew, more so in foggy weather, so start treating them before trouble develops, it's easier that way. Keep after snails and slugs.

### FERTILIZER TIME

All lawns should be given extra food just now. Actually, the whole garden needs fertilizing, except for citrus trees. Narcissus that are out of bloom are storing nutriment through their leaves for next year's crop so keep the leaves green and growing as long as possible with some extra food. Watering is equally important. Enlarge the basins around trees to the drip line and give a thorough soaking at regular intervals. Amaryllis and agapanthus appreciate extra moisture right now.

### REPOT CAREFULLY

If you wish to move or repot azaleas make haste to do so before the new leaves come out. Watch new and old plantings

## CONTENTS

Orchids	
Cattleyas . . .	Hothouse Culture.....12
Cymbidiums . . .	Vigor & Ease.... 9
Cypripediums . . .	Alluring as Ever....14
Big Show-Off . . .	Entry Notes....16
Roses	
Annual Parade of Roses.....	20
Calendar of Care.....	24
Lilies	
Forgotten Beauty . . .	R. Hoyt....19
Strange Kin . . .	D. Betts.....21
How to Enter a Flower Show.....	17
Color on the Rocks . . .	Harden....22
Flower Show Calendar.....	7
Garden Tour Schedules.....	19
Hints on Lawn Care . . .	Parrent....18
Table Topics Tea.....	18

## DEPARTMENTS

Book Tours .....	29
Calendar of Care.....	24
Begonias, Camellias, Dahlias, Roses	
50 Years Ago.....	6

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## ... garden chores ...

to see that they do not sink below the original level of the pots they came in. Plant a little high in the soil to avoid this and check to see that the mulch does not build up on the trunk at the base. Use the same precautions with camellias and rhododendrons. All grass-type plants may be divided now, papyrus, etc. Dig up old chrysanthemum clumps and replant young outside stems, throwing away the center stub. Four-inch cuttings will root quickly and be far healthier than the divisions. Most gardeners cut poinsettias back now. When planting the old canes be sure they are right side up. (Leaf scars should point upward).

### SUBTROPICALS

Avocados, macadamias, guavas and other subtropicals can go in during April. Better wait to plant citrus fruit trees until the ground is really warm in May. Cannas like compost, old manure and superphosphate. Scant the water for a couple of weeks until growth begins. Caladium roots are ready, treat the same as cannas. Gladiolus planted now are more subject to thrips during the warm season. Try some gloxinia if tubers are available, if not, small plants are sometimes available in plant bands. They are fun to grow on to flowering size. Don't over-water or leave the foliage wet.

### QUICK, EASY COLOR

Primulas of the Polyantha type and coral bells will give quick color now and repeat again. Lobelia and delphinium carry the blue notes low and high, on through most of the summer. Pick up some plants of campanula. Varieties Mayi and Alba are choice for summer hanging baskets but there are several other types that make fine ground covers all the time with an extra bonus of blue bells in June. Herbs can open a world of charm for you in scent, color, taste and unusual and different beauty. Start collecting them whenever you see nice young plants. Peppers and eggplants are handsome and timely now. A couple of plants will stock a family all summer. Set out tomatoes in May.

### WILD LILAC

No garden should be without some of the native ceanothus, usually known as Wild Lilac. The tall one, Sierra Blue, is a blaze of blue glory now. There is a great range of blue shades in this plant and it also comes in dwarf sizes and ground covers. In May the crepy-white Matilija Poppy will tempt you. Buy it in cans, it does not transplant or divide well, in fact it is a temperamental beauty that must be treated like a wilding. If space is no problem *Echium fastuosum*, Pride of Maderia, sends up spikes of blue that are a joy to behold in the coming months. Best of all, it will take a poor soil and likes sea air. The white Rockrose thrives under the same conditions. It is blooming now, a spreading mound of dark green almost covered with small five-petalled white flowers. Visit the many fine nurseries listed in these pages for other "garden goodies" of the season, and tell them *California Garden* sent you.

ALICE M. CLARK  
San Diego Floral Association

# Flower Show Calender

1. Orchid Show—San Diego County Orchid Society  
Conference Building, Balboa Park, San Diego, California  
April 6 & 7, 1963, 10 am to 6 pm
2. Rose Show—San Diego Rose Society  
Electric Building, Balboa Park, San Diego, California  
April 13 & 14, 1963, 10 am to 6 pm
3. Vista Garden Club  
Recreation Center, Vista, California  
April 20 & 21, 1963, 2 pm to 7 pm Saturday, and 10 am to 5 pm Sunday
4. Coronado Floral Association  
Spreckels Park, Coronado, California  
April 20 & 21, 1963, 10 am to 6 pm
5. Lakeside Woman's Club, Garden Section  
Memorial Building, Lindo Lake Park  
April 25, 1963, 12 m to 8 pm
6. Imperial Beach Garden Club  
Carpenter's Hall, Palm City, California  
April 26 & 27, 1963, 12 m to 6 pm
7. Santa Maria Valley Garden Club  
Woman's Club, Ramona, California  
April 27, 1963
8. Dos Valles Garden Club  
Rotunda of Rincon Springs Inn, Pauma Valley, California  
April 27 & 28, 1963, 12 m to 7 pm
9. Julian Wildflower Show  
Basement of City Hall, Julian, California  
May 12 to 26, 1963
10. Poway Valley Garden Club  
High School Bldg., Poway, California  
May 17 & 18, 1963
11. Grossmont Center Garden Club  
Grossmont Shopping Center on the Mall  
May 17 & 18, 1963
12. Chula Vista Community Flower Show  
Recreation Center on the Parkway, Chula Vista, Calif.  
May 25 & 26, 1963, Saturday, 2 pm to 6 pm and Sunday  
10 am to 5:30 pm



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# California Garden

APRIL-MAY, 1963

IN THE ORCHID  
WORLD, VIGOR,  
EASE OF GROWTH,  
GREAT RANGE OF  
COLOR AND FINE  
QUALITY WON FANS  
FOR THE RICH . . .

## CYMBIDIUMS

By Fred Stewart

CYMBIDIUMS are among the easiest of all orchids to grow. They can be successfully grown and flowered in all the temperate parts of the United States and the world. Each year Cymbidiums are becoming more popular, for they are, from many standpoints, one of the most satisfactory of all orchids to grow. Their vigor, ease of growth, pleasant appearance when not in bloom, long lasting flower quality and great range of rich pastel colors, are all reasons for their increasing popularity.

With Cymbidiums we must fix in our mind that they are cool growing terrestrials (plants that grow in soil) and that they put out a great deal of growth each year, compared to other types of orchids.

In California, where they can be grown out of doors, Cymbidiums may be grown in a lathhouse where conditions are favorable for Camellias, Azaleas and other shade loving plants. They are often grown successfully in the ground under trees where the shading is not too dense and the tree roots do not rob them

of nourishment and moisture. If grown in pots or tubs under trees, this is not a problem.

In areas where winter freezing occurs, a glasshouse is required to protect Cymbidiums from below freezing temperatures. When grown under glass, a minimum night temperature of around fifty degrees is considered optimum. When grown out of doors, Cymbidiums will tolerate temperatures around, or even slightly below, freezing. If the temperature should drop to freezing though, a bed sheet, sack or sheet of flexible plastic should be thrown over the plants for their protection.

### SUITABLE SOIL

Cymbidiums can be grown in soils suitable to other shade loving plants. An important fact to bear in mind in formulating a Cymbidium soil is that the drainage must be good. Though Cymbidiums require

Fred Stewart is a popular commercial breeder of orchids with headquarters in San Gabriel, California.

great amounts of water during the growing season, they will not tolerate any standing water around their roots. Most composts today generally contain many or all of the following ingredients in varying proportions:

- (1) Leaf mold for physical properties, food value and beneficial action.
- (2) Clay free silt sand for body.
- (3) Garden peat for physical properties, acid reaction, food value and moisture retention.
- (4) Palco wool (ground redwood bark) for buffering action, acid pH and general physical properties.
- (5) Fir bark for physical properties, acid reaction, food and moisture retention.
- (6) Lime for proper acidity (around pH 6)
- (7) Fertilizers for food.

The basic facts to bear in mind when you mix your soil are: make sure it is open and porous, has an acid reaction and that the drainage is thorough.

Assuming that we do have a carefully formulated mix with sufficient food value and good drainage, we must now balance this off with generous watering in order to assure the plants optimum growth. During the active growing season, which runs roughly from March through September in most parts of the United States, Cymbidium plants should be watered sufficiently to keep the compost quite on the moist side, in fact quite wet compared to Cattleya culture. One of the main causes of leaf tip die-back is insufficient water during the growing season. It is important when watering to see that the plant is thoroughly watered. Sufficient water to avoid shriveling of the bulbs is a good general rule during the cold winter months.

### REPOTTING

A mature Cymbidium plant growing in a pot or tube is generally repotted or divided every two or three years. Repotting is necessary when the plant has filled the container with its growth or when the compost has broken down. The best time for repotting a mature plant is *as early as possible in the spring after the plant has flowered*, at least by the end of May.

If a plant that is being repotted

# CYMBIDIUM

## Fertilizing, Growth & Division

### Chart

Use low nitrogen fertilizer.

Do not feed if weather cold or overcast.

This is most dormant period.

Main blooming season.

Use *low* nitrogen fertilizer to induce bloom spikes.

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

Divide and repot if not in bloom, or as soon as flowers cut.

Most rapid growth period. Use well-balanced *high* protein fertilizer. *Give lots of water and light.*

Months in which most spikes appear.

are most garden plants. Of course, care must always be taken to see that slugs and snails are kept under control. Orchid scale can be cleaned off with a toothbrush and plants sprayed with Malathion or DDT solution. *Red Spider* is perhaps the most persistent and difficult to detect of the pests. It can be found under the leaves where it sucks the surface sap and makes the undersides appear scratchy-whitish or silvery where the surface cells have lost their sap. Malathion and the new spray, "Aramite," is very effective. There are a few rot and virus diseases found on Cymbidiums. The spread of these diseases can be controlled by proper precautionary measures, such as segregating, sterilizing cutting tools, and keeping the plants in good health.

#### FEEDING

Fertilizing is a much discussed subject. We believe that a compost, such as has been recommended, contains sufficient plant food to last for some months. However, if it is decided to use a fertilizer, it should have an acid reaction.

If a commercial fertilizer is used, it should be applied at about one-third the strength recommended for other plants. Orchids do not like a strong fertilizing program. Brands frequently used in Southern California are Stewart's Ideal Orchid Fertilizer, Vigoro, Hyponex, Gav-iota or "312," and are applied at the rate of two teaspoons to one gallon of water about every two weeks to a month during the growing season.

An attempt has not been made to cover the field completely, but to outline a few of the basic procedures in the general culture of Cymbidiums. It must be understood that culture may vary greatly according to locality. Good common growing sense is always a valuable asset.

If you are in a locality where others are growing Cymbidiums, find a grower who is doing a good job and have him guide you wherever possible. Always bear in mind, too, that there is no short cut to good culture. You will get from your plants just what you give them in good care.

*Swallows in flight are recalled by this array of cymbidiums from Fred Stewart, of San Gabriel, California.*

has a compact growth habit and does not have any, or more than a few, leafless bulbs, it is often advisable to merely wash off the old soil from the roots and shift the plant without dividing to a larger pot with fresh soil. With larger plants which may have a number of rootless, leafless bulbs in the center (called Back Bulbs), it is generally desirable to remove these rear bulbs at the time of repotting and dividing.

When dividing observe how the plant is growing and try to make well balanced plants of each division. From three to seven mature leaved bulbs can be considered a flowering size division. Do not be too eager to divide into small plants, for it takes a good sized, well established plant to produce the best flowers.

#### LIGHT IMPORTANT

This is one of the most important factors in the successful flowering

of Cymbidiums. A good general rule is to give the plants sufficient light so that the foliage is greenish yellow, rather than a verdant green.

If the plants are grown under trees, make sure that the shade is medium to light, such as afforded by California Live Oaks. Trees such as Avocados or other dense shade types give too much shade. Several hours of clear early morning and/or late afternoon sun are highly desirable. We wish to emphasize that too dense shading is not conducive to optimum flowering.

We are learning continually that Cymbidiums produce more and better flowers when given greater light intensity than has generally been accepted as optimum. *When plants are in flower, however, heavier shading should be given to promote clearer colored, better quality flowers.*

Fortunately, Cymbidiums are subject to fewer pests and diseases than





visible to leave them open at night, to about  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1" opening. It should be remembered, however, that while Cattleyas require a maximum amount of air at all times, they should not be subjected to draughts, as this causes the plants to dry out too quickly, and it is also likely to chill them.

#### POTTING MEDIA

Orchids have been grown in just about everything imaginable. However, osmunda is still the easiest medium in which to grow Cattleyas. (I said easiest to grow plants in.)

Disadvantages: Expensive to purchase; takes longer to pot, therefore more labor; takes experienced personnel to do a good, uniform potting job; you need machinery and labor to chop it up to the required size and to screen it before use; and it is dirty to work with.

Advantages: A good grade of brown or yellow osmunda will last two to three years; it is not subject to mycelium fungus; you do not have to feed plants, although it helps; it will retain moisture for a longer period of time than bark; and osmunda does not need any additives.

Fir bark has become quite popular in the culture of orchid plants of all kinds.

Disadvantages: You should add Dolomite lime to adjust the pH and add calcium and magnesium; it has to be fertilized with a high nitrogen fertilizer—3-1-1; it is subject to mycelium fungus which seems to be a serious problem to keep under control; it is a good host for millepedes which tend to break down the material.

Advantages: Inexpensive; easy to pot and requires less labor; pots faster than osmunda; clean to use; lasting quality without fungus or millepedes infection is two years. growth is phenomenal; and there is practically no damp off in seedlings out of flask.

For adult Cattleyas use  $\frac{5}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$ " size clean uniform bark. For seedlings use  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{8}$ " size. It is important to feed when using fir bark. Nitrogen is the most important element required. Frequent light feedings with 3-1-1 fertilizer are better than occasional heavy feeding. To keep the millepedes under control, Dieldren in liquid or granules is recommended. If liquid, use at time of watering, if granules, sprinkle on



*Two prize winning Cattleya entries in a recent Orchid Society of Southern California show by Arm-acost and Royston.*

top of the fir bark in the pots.

Here we go again. We have been experimenting with a medium consisting of  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{3}$  coarse redwood shavings to  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{2}{3}$  fir bark. We hope this material will tend to control the mycelium fungus, as it does not seem to grow in redwood.

Another product we are experimenting with is coarse redwood bark, called Palco Wool, medium grade. This is more expensive than fir bark, acid in nature, therefore it requires addition of dolomite lime. It pots about like Osmunda and retains moisture well. It also has to be fertilized, does not seem to be subject to mycelium fungus. Root action in this medium seems to be good. Time will tell.

#### POTTING

When do I repot my orchids? This question is asked constantly. It must be remembered that the majority of Cattleyas today are complex hybrids, with little or no rest-

ing period. Repotting is usually done when the plants are through blooming, are crowding the inside of the pot, or growing over the edge. The best time is when there are signs of renewed root action, such as roots commencing to grow from the base of the new growth. Whenever possible it is best to wait for the new growth to make up, and pot just as the new roots start to show at the base of the rhizome. However, if the medium is broken down or sour it is best to move the plant into fresh material, as long as it is not in bud. In some cases root action will start before the growth is made up. It is best to pot at that time to save the roots.

In any case, potting should not be done just prior to blooming. This will prevent the flowers from developing properly.

Fir bark should be moist when repotting, and allow plenty of space

for the plant to grow for at least two years.

#### WATERING AND FERTILIZING

After repotting the plants do not require too much water until root action develops. However, they should be given frequent overhead sprayings during bright warm weather. Once root action starts they should be watered thoroughly. Depending on the weather, large plants in 7 inch pots and up may go from one to two weeks between waterings. Smaller sized pots may be watered from once to twice a week. A word of caution is necessary on watering in fir bark. We have noticed that the first six months or so, new material does not seem to hold water very long. However, after a period of six months to a year, when the bark begins to break down it will hold moisture for a longer period, although on the surface it appears to be dry. Be careful at this time not to over water.

When the pseudo bulbs appear dry and shrivelled, it may be due to loss of roots, insufficient water, or lack of humidity in the greenhouse.

As I have mentioned before, when growing in fir bark feeding is a must. Use a 3-1-1 fertilizer. This may be used every other watering, or a half strength solution every watering.

#### CONTROL OF PESTS

The most likely insect pests found in Cattleya orchids are thrips, greenfly or aphids, scale, millepedes, slugs, snails, mealy bugs and ants.

Cookes Slug and Snail will keep these animals under control. Diel-dren is recommended for millepedes and ants. Malathion spray should take care of the rest of the insects. Of course there are other insecticides that will do the job just as well, possibly better. Consult the nurseryman in your area.

An easy one to use is called Smoke Fume 103. It comes in a cardboard container and consists of Tetraethyl Dithiopyrophosphate 15%. Close up the greenhouse late in the evening. Shut off all fans. Punch a hole in the top of the container, insert the fuse, light it, and it is all set to do the job. Next morning open the vents and air out the greenhouse and turn on your fans. This will control spider mites (red spider), aphids, whitefly, and some species of mealy bugs, thrips and soft brown scale.

## Allure of the *Cypripediums*

THE LADY SLIPPER

MAY OR MAY NOT BE

YOUR FIRST ORCHID

LOVE, BUT HER MANY

MOODS WILL WIN YOU

by Robert D. Jones

SOME people are immediately attracted to the *Cypripediums* the first time they see them, but generally the primary reaction is to look elsewhere in the orchid family for their "first love." Most people will eventually return for a second look at this delightful genus and they begin to notice how infinitely varied are the color combinations and how interesting these variations are as they look from plant to plant. They notice that this is a truly different flower—like no other genera of the orchid family. Although it took no genius to give this group the common name of "Lady Slipper," doesn't it seem like a stroke of genius when we see the flower, for even a child is intrigued by the name and the slipper shape of the pouch?

For many years this genera has been the favorite orchid in both the large and small orchid collections of the English orchid fanciers. Although this has not been true here, we commercial people notice that the interest in *Cypripediums* continues to increase each year. Much of this interest is due to new introductions of our American growers.

In the new crosses we notice the

colors have been brightened and more distinct patterns are apparent in the large dorsal sepal which forms the background of the flower. There are lovely chocolate browns, purple reds, and rich reds in the *Cypripediums* now making their appearance. Examine the spotted types and you will notice that these wine red or mahogany spots are raised or embossed on the white dorsal sepal, giving a real third dimensional appearance. Many people like the pastel colored flowers in green or yellow, or green and white stripes. No collection should be without the all white flowers for their chaste appearance is always refreshing.

#### ADDS SPARKLE

A *Cypripedium* plant in bloom adds sparkle to any room in the home. The small white flowers are intriguing and a conversation piece on the coffee table. Some of the flowers of the Italian Species have a

---

*The spectacular Cypripedium, "Point Lobos" was developed by Rod McLellan Co., of South San Francisco, Calif.*





# The Big Show-Off

17th Annual  
San Diego County Orchid Show

Place: Conference Building, Balboa Park.

Date: 5-6-7.

Hours: Friday, April 5, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. for Garden Center Benefit Preview. Donation of \$1 per person for center.

Saturday, April 6, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Regular Show.

Sunday, April 7, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Theme: Enchanted Gardens.

Entry Registration will be held Thursday, April 4, from 6 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. and Friday, April 5, from 7 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Late entries may be displayed, but will not compete.

Award judging of all orchid genera will be by the American Orchid Society, Cymbidium Society and Orchid Digest Corp. certified judges.

The San Diego County Orchid Society will sponsor 14 special trophies for amateur, novice-amateur, commercial and open competitions for exhibits and individual plants. Exhibitors need not be members of the Orchid Society.

distinctive oriental look which is completely at home with the modern trend in using oriental design in our homes. A sojourn of a month in the house does not hurt these really hardy plants if we make sure to keep them always well watered. The beautiful foliage of these plants makes them fantastically useful house plants.

The *Cypripedium* is an outstanding corsage flower because of its durability and long life. Many wearers have reported using the same corsage for several occasions over as long as two weeks when the flowers are put in water between times. As cut flowers or when left on the plant they last from four to six weeks.

One maker of automobiles claims they have "A Rocket for every Pocket." Likewise, we *Cypripedium* producers have good plants to suit the pockets of all and the investment and returns in enjoyment increase each year.

## NEW PLANTS

Where will we grow our new plants? Certainly a greenhouse, large or small, that can be main-

tained at 60° night temperature is the most satisfactory place for these plants. However, in mild climates such as San Diego County, they can be grown in shady areas similar to those where *Camellias* grow well outdoors. We have found that they can also be grown in homes because they are shade loving and do not require too high humidity.

Although these plants really have a few cultural requirements compared to some orchids, these should be considered in more detail.

**LIGHT.** Outdoors they must be in the shade of tall trees and allowed to have only early morning sunlight—not afternoon sunlight. In the greenhouse a shady spot with no direct light is desirable. Practically, if one holds out his hand and it casts a distinct shadow it is too bright for these plants. A very slight shadow is about right. An east window in the house that receives early morning sun will be a suitable location.

**WATER.** Cyps must be kept wet at all times. The roots will not tolerate a dry condition. Most people

who start growing Cyps after they have been growing *Cattleya* orchids have a tendency to underwater Cyps because they are so accustomed to allowing the *Cattleyas* to dry out between waterings.

**POTTING MEDIUM.** The potting material should be porous so that the water moves freely through the pot. Many growers are quite successful in using fir bark with a particle size of 1/4" to which about 10% dry oak leaves has been added. Fine fir bark to which about 15% coarse sand is added by volume is also successfully used. Some growers use only fir bark. Most of the potting mixtures sold by commercial growers for Cyps are well tested and very foolproof.

**TEMPERATURE.** The Spring period from March 15th to June 15th is critical because cool nights are required to insure flower buds forming in the Fall. The night temperature should be no higher than 60° and it can be 5° to 15° lower without damage. During the rest of the year 60° is fine and a little higher will do no harm. Day temperatures can range from 70° to 90° and 100° occasionally will not hurt. The plants will stand to 32° F. outdoors.

**FERTILIZING.** Most of the modern fir bark mixtures require fertilizing if we are to be successful growing these plants. Liquid fertilizers that have a composition of about 25% to 30% Nitrogen, 9% or 10% Phosphate, and 9% or 10% Potash are very good. However, slight variations of this formula are all right.

Every other watering should be with a light fertilizer solution. Be sure to water heavily between fertilizer applications to prevent soluble salt accumulation. The root action of a plant is a good indicator of the health of a *Cypripedium*. If a plant has very few roots it should be repotted. It may also indicate that you are giving too much fertilizer. A lot of roots may indicate that the plant is healthy but could use a little more fertilizer to reach its maximum growth.

*Cypripediums* should be repotted immediately after flowering. Some mixes last two years but others seem to break down at the end of one year. If in doubt ask the commercial grower whether the mixture will be all right for two years.



# How To Enter Your Prize Bloom In a Flower Show

## *One Contest Whets Your Interest - Here Are The Mysterious Entry Rites*

NO ONE ever forgets their first flower show, mine was a rose show in 1957. I had joined the San Diego Rose Society the previous fall and had made reams of notes at each meeting, had attended a rose pruning demonstration, to say nothing of talking the arm off of a lot of patient people.

I carefully followed all of the good cultural practices I had learned and suddenly it was just days before show time.

Since hybrid tea roses must be shown disbudded I had been flicking out all tiny side buds with a toothpick. Now I had picked aphids too as I checked the rose garden for any overlooked side buds, removing them completely with a pocket knife. The judges must not see any stubs or scars.

Deep, deep watering is especially important during the week before the show so that the blooms will be crisp and stay fresh through the show.

Show roses must be immaculate, so the day before the show I went through the garden with a jar of vinegar and water plus some paper towels, washing the leaves of all possible entries. It is much easier to clean the foliage of dust and spray residue while the bloom is on the plant.

In the evening I started cutting the roses that were from one-third to one-half open with stems at least six times the length of the bud, putting them directly into the bucket of water I carried with me. This I put in a dark corner of the garage overnight.

Very early next morning I cut any other possible

entries, added them to my bucket of water. So, with my roses in water I gathered together suggested grooming aids and headed for the show area.

These aids were a fine water color brush for coaxing petals into a symmetrical circle, a pair of manicure scissors for trimming any damaged leaves and a nylon stocking for cleaning foliage of any overlooked spray residue.

Members of the show committee were on hand with copies of the show schedule, bundles of entry tags, and containers set up in which to put the rose entries. Before placing each rose in the container of water I snipped a quarter inch off of each stem and made use of the grooming aids as necessary.

Some rose varieties develop pairs of outer petals with white streaks. These **must** be removed—do it last. I then attached a proper entry tag to each container, took a deep breath and gave them to the entry committee.

A few hours later I learned that I had won a few ribbons—one of them blue.

Needless to say, each show since then has found me in the show area bright and early. I've learned since that grandifloras are entered strictly as they grow—no tampering here. Floribunda sprays should have blooms in every stage from green buds to full blown flowers, with no flowers removed. The stems in both cases should be long enough to be in balance with the flower head and with two sets of leaves at least.

P.S. See you at the show and may all your ribbons be blue.

Nettie Trott  
San Diego Rose Society



## Hints On Lawn Care

By Foster Parrent

THE loose aggregates and fir-bark leave much to be desired when your backyard ground cover does double duty as a setting for backyard plantings and play yard for the children, so let us put in a plug and some comment on backyard lawns that are rugged and eye-pleasing at the same time.

The average size backyard of 50 to 60 feet wide and 40 to 50 feet in length can be planted around the perimeter with shrubs, flowers and a few trees and still leave a fairly large lawn area for the kiddies to romp and play on—and your lawn will hold up very well providing it has good basic lawn materials to start with.

The mixture that seems to hold up best in the yards that we take care of is a lawn of about equal amounts of dichondra and Bermuda grass planted on a good sandy topsoil of 4 inch depth, fertilized in March, June and September with a fertilizer concocted around an activated sewer sludge base and regular watering to favor the dichondra, or fine grasses.

We usually water three times a week (like Monday morning, Wednesday morning, and Friday afternoon or Saturday morning). Each watering should be sufficient to really saturate the first one inch of soil. This will usually be sufficient to keep the lawn soil actually damp to 6 inches deep, which we have found to be ideal in maintaining a really lush bermuda and dichondra lawn.

This watering situation is probably the most important there is in keeping a lawn in a healthy condition. Usually you will find that leaving your regular pop-up head sprinklers on for one-half hour total each separate watering day will get the lawn wet to one-inch deep. Rainbird type sprinklers set on 1/2

circle coverage and 25-30 feet radius circle should water one double watering to wash fertilizer in, and one additional regular amount of water the day after fertilizing to keep fertilizer from burning.

Regardless of the type of sprinkler system, you should check the actual lawn soil for depth of wet area so that you can increase or decrease the length of time you run your sprinkler. This includes the portable type sprinklers. However, let me say that your best investment in maintaining a good lawn is a good sprinkling system.

### TOUGH SOILS

A word here about hard soils like those in Clairemont and much of La Jolla. Get one of the many liquid soil conditioners at your local nursery and use it as per instructions. Remember—it takes water to make the soil conditioner work properly. We always put soil conditioner on all of our newly planted lawns just before the first watering.

The dichondra and bermuda mixture lawn will do its best if mowed at mower settings of 1 1/2 inches on power mowers and about 1 inch on hand mowers. To keep the lawn really healthy and neat you should

mow once a week from April through September and once every two weeks the rest of the year. However, you may find that the once a week deal is more than you have time for, or money for if you have a professional gardener. In these instances, every two weeks all the time will do the job very well. Of course, the lawn will look a little ragged toward the middle of the second week, but you will certainly have a deeper-rooted lawn because of the longer wait between mowings.

### EDGING NECESSARY

Always edge your lawn every two weeks even if you have lawn header boards, cement edgings or the like. (Sorry, but I cannot recommend aluminum edgings). If you have edging boards of some other lawn confiner, make sure that it goes 6 inches deep and that you use a disc-type edger to keep grass from growing over the edge. Even a tough lawn like Bermuda and dichondra should be sprayed for lawn moths and cut worms a minimum of June, July and September. If you have a rye lawn or one of the bent or blue grass lawns, spray once a month March through October.

Once a year in October or November, you should shave mow all bermuda lawns down to about a half-inch if you have dichondra in it, and lower if there is no dichondra. Reseed the bare spots with dichondra at double the regular rate for a new lawn, and cover the seeded spots with about 1/8" of good sacked steer manure.

The rest of the lawn should have weed-free steer put on at the rate of one sack of steer to each 200 square feet of area. This manure should be swept into the lawn so that it makes contact with the ground and provides a cover for the natural existing dichondra seed. Water twice a day for one week, then once a day for the next two weeks. Then go back to your regular schedule of watering. You won't have to mow for a month to six weeks, but trim those edges.

In the winter time you will have to check the lawn soil before you water. If the ground is wet, don't water. If it is damp, water lightly and check the ground for one inch depth being wet. Water in the morning only through the months of November through February, or you will have some lawn rot and/or mould.

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### Table Topics Tea

Balboa Park Auditorium, House of Hospitality, Balboa Park, San Diego, California.

Thursday, April 18, 1963

12 to 4 p.m.

Table setting competition—30 tables entered. Sponsored by Aurora Unit of the Auxiliary to the Salvation Army, Door of Hope Hospital and Home.

*You Are Invited*

## TAKE TOUR OF COUNTY GARDENS

RANCHO SANTA FE  
GARDEN CLUB TOUR

April 6-7, 1963.

Hours: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Tour starts from Garden Club  
in Rancho Santa Fe.

Transportation between the  
four homes and one garden on  
the tour will be furnished by  
club members or their husbands.

Homes on the tour are those  
of Messrs. and Mmes. Gifford  
C. Ewing, Harrie Taylor,  
Horace L. Blackman, James P.  
Witherow and J. M. French.

Food and refreshments will  
be offered guests during the  
tour.

Donation: Groups of people  
over 10, \$3 each, or \$3.50 for  
individuals.

CLAIREMONT WOMAN'S  
CLUB GARDEN SECTION

April 6, 1963.

Hours: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Tour starts from 2635 Grand-  
view, San Diego 17.

The five homes to be visited  
are the gardens of Messrs. and  
Mmes. Eugene Adair, Sam Lip-  
sett, Charles Molnar, Fred W.  
Strong, Leroy M. Short and  
George E. Cooke.

A garden plant sale is  
planned at the Molnar home.  
Refreshments will be served at  
the Adair home.

Donation: \$1 per person.

ST. JAMES-BY-THE-SEA  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

April 20, 1963.

Buses will leave every 15 min-  
utes from the church at Silver-  
ado and Eads, in La Jolla.

Tea will be served following  
the tour at the La Jolla Beach  
and Tennis Club.

Donation: \$2.50 per person.



ROLAND HOYT RECOMMENDS:

### *A Forgotten Beauty*

**V**ELTHEIMIA viridifolia is a  
bulbous perennial and a very  
old plant that has been known  
to gardens for considerably more  
than a hundred years. It was named  
for the Count Ferdinand of Vel-  
theim, an early patron of botany.  
Why it has been neglected all these  
years in a country where good peren-  
nial species are at a premium, is  
answered only in embarrassment and  
with awkward stance.

Here is something of a spectacle.  
A cluster of bulbs in flower is al-

ways arresting, while the vivid viri-  
dian-green of the great, wavy, shin-  
ing leaves, longer at the base and  
shorter above, accents the name deri-  
vation. They are a delight for cool-  
ness of vegetation and quiet warmth  
in bloom nine to ten months of the  
year. The leaves are somewhat  
fleshy and spread out in a hand-  
some arc to form a rather tight  
mass.

All winter they are firm and dur-  
able, but after flowering the mass  
tends to go flabby until it sinks into

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# PARADE OF ROSES

## Annual Spring Show

THE thirty-sixth annual Spring Rose Show of the San Diego Rose Society, Inc. will be held in the Electric Building, Balboa Park, on Saturday and Sunday, April 13 and 14, 1963, the Easter week-end. The show promises to be one of the most beautiful ever presented here, and the largest all rose show held anywhere in the United States.

Unlike other sections of the country where June is the traditional Month of roses, San Diego's best rose month is April, and rose gardens are usually at their very best about the 15th of April. Since Easter falls on the 14th of April, the rose group is proud to present to San Diego an Easter "Parade of Roses."

One large exhibit room of the Electric Building will display the cut competitive blooms, and a second large hall will house the arrangement section. Also displaying with the Rose Society for the first time will be the Potter's Guild, and the Art Guild from the Spanish Village Art Center.

The rose Queen has been chosen from entries submitted by Bethel 199, Job's Daughters. She is lovely Miss Marilyn Lee Moresette. All members of her Bethel will assist her by hosting at the show, wearing formals and looking even lovelier than the roses.

Commercial displays will be on view, and a program of lectures and films on roses and rose culture will be scheduled throughout the two day event.

Rose entries may be made by anyone who grows his own roses, and there is no entry fee. The society urges every rose lover to enter his blooms, and reminds the prospective exhibitor that it only takes one bloom entry to carry away the Best Bloom trophy. Ribbons will be awarded in all classes, and there are thirty-four trophy classes, all but five open to anyone. These five are open to members of the San Diego Rose Society only, but anyone may qualify for these five also by joining the society. Membership is open to any interested person.

Jean Kenneally

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dormancy by early summer. They want moisture during growth, but the more thoroughly the bulb mass is allowed to sleep in dryness over summer, the sounder they will perform throughout the producing season, foliage and the flowers to follow.

This period should be from two to three months midsummer when the bulb mass will be better off

shaded . . . easily done in a tub, not so convenient as grown in the ground where it will be depending on neighboring vegetation for overcover. In this case, plant types which require minimum moisture will serve best.

The flowers are showy in a quiet way, the florets erect at first, then pendulous in a dense, oblong-conical spike or head. This is held at 18-24 inches, but actually at 30 inches in this photograph, usually 25 to 50 or more cylindrical tubes, rosy purple with a faint yellow dotting that enlivens.

The buds are at first erect and green-tipped, then lavender-touched as they begin to sag . . . finally, the floret fully opened, completely suspended, with the yellow anthers just showing. The blooming can be more or less controlled for any time here between December 15 to April 1st . . . regulation consisting of moisture and its timing and length of dormancy allowed.

The plant flourishes in a fertile, sandy soil with added leaf mould or spent steer manure, although they are not at all demanding. The blooming will be longer and the foliage firmer in partial shade, again not absolutely required. The bulb is large, as much as five or six inches through, ultimately in a snug mass that tends to push up out of the ground in growth . . . hence the summer cover. They are hardy into warm temperature regions of climate, adapting to the shorter season with later flowerings and going into winter dormant, if handled correctly. They will stand for a heavy mulch as taken still farther into frost, but reach a point when they must be lifted.

Viable seed is produced rather freely . . . offsets to the bulb less generously, while according to John Weathers, under English conditions, the well ripened leaves may be inserted into sandy soil to produce new bulbils at the base. The writer has flowered these the third to fourth year from seed, although a larger bulb is required to furnish the heads shown in the illustration. This particular plant is ten or twelve years old, grown in tubs, divided once.

It is not in any way an understatement to say the nursery trade is in dereliction of its obligation to the gardening public and to horticulture in general, when it passes by a plant such as this which is so easily, if not quickly propagated and brought to saleable size and which offers so much for so little attention . . . there seem to be no diseases or serious pests . . . only those who steal the spikes. The only nurseries on the west coast known by the writer to have supplied this species are Carl Starker Gardens, Jennings Lodge, Oregon and our own De-Haan's Shoreline Nurseries in Leucadia, California . . . greetings and gratitude to both of you from all of us . . . exempli gratia.

Roland S. Hoyt

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Roland Hoyt is a member of ASLA and author of *Ornamental Plants for Subtropical Regions*.



## *I said 'Lilies' and he sent a Joshua-tree*

# STRANGE KIN

By Donald Betts

TO look at the sepulchral beauty of the Bermuda Easter Lily, one would never guess the number of skeletons lined up in its family closet. But skeletons there are by the dozens in this huge family and some are famous in their own right.

Those who cater to the florist trade are working feverishly to force into bloom this famous Easter Lily, or *Lilium longiflorum*, variety *eximium*, whose pure white flowers and delicate fragrance reflect so well the annual ritual of awakening Nature.

The hundred-or-so species of true lilies scattered throughout the temperate zone are well known, but what of the skeletons?

The Joshua-tree is one such skeleton, difficult as it may seem to believe. This spectral individual is said to have been named by the Mormons crossing the desert. Perhaps the strange, uplifted branches and massive trunk reminded them of Joshua commanding the sun to stand still. The *Joshua-tree* is *Yucca brevifolia*. Therefore, all other yuccas are members of the lily family, which includes the well-known Spanish-dagger and our own desert candle.

Among the 2,500 species in the Lily family, the *Liliaceae*, there is also the dragon-tree.

The dragon-tree, *Dracaena draco*, of the Canary Islands is a relative of the lily. Here is another extremity in contrast frequently seen in cultivation all over Southern California.

There is a handsome specimen on the ocean side of the Art Center in La Jolla. The Latin name of this plant refers to a "female dragon" and was given because of the dried sap, said in olden days to resemble dragon's blood.

Succulent enthusiasts are quite familiar with the many species of aloe found in such profusion in the gardens of Southern California, but who would guess that these strange, fleshy-leaved plants are also related to lilies?

This is true of two other well-known genera of succulents, small enough to be found in our gardens, *Gasteria* and *Haworthia*. Yet each of

these fascinating plants is closely tied in to the lily family.

The snake-plant or *Sansevieria*, those rigid-erect, barred leaves, potted for our patios, also belongs to the lily group, again illustrating the ramification of form this family can take.

For a change of pace, the entire onion genus, *Allium*, and *Asparagus*, all the *asparagus* "ferns" which we know so well, are not ferns at all, but lilies.

Getting down to an old-fashioned garden, we find other lilies that are not generally known as such, hyacinths, tulips, for instance, and *Hemerocallis*, the yellow day-lily.

One more easily identifiable is also one of the most delicately beautiful plants of the lily family. It blooms on the arid wastes of our California desert lands, often as the only form of plant life on barren stretches of sun-baked sand . . . the desert-lily, *Hesperocallis*. The bulb of this more nearly conformable lily is set so deeply, that the ordinary spoiler will take only the seed and thus will not destroy the perpetuation of the species.

Then there is *Fritillaria*, another accordant to type, including the Chocolate-lily or Mission-bells. Van Gogh, the Dutch painter, has done a moving cluster of this plant in a brass bowl, an inexpensive copy of which hangs against the redwood wall of my den and gives me perpetual pleasure. Before closing may I also mention my Mother's favorite flower, lily-of-the-valley, which does not flourish here in the South. Nor should we forget to include the western Mariposa-lily which can be grown here, if one really tries. This is *Calochortus* which includes some of the most beautifully marked and tinted flowers in the lily family.

Other well-known members of the family are Solomon's-seal, smilax, Indian cucumber-root, dog-berry and the common greenbriar of our eastern states. The list could go on and on, with species indigenous here and to distant parts of the world.

Beyond and on top of all these may be placed the 800 species of *Amaryllis*, the thousand or more of *Iris* and three hundred rushes, just to get started and stop . . . all closely related and gathered botanically under the lily order or *Liliaceae*, cousins, uncles and aunts. What an incredible and bewildering variety in plant life and this but one order in many!

*No matter where you need it — wall, border or dish garden — this family will furnish fine*

# COLOR ON THE ROCKS

**By Cleoves Hardin**



*Aeonium sedifolium*

**T**HE genus *Sempervivum* consists of about twenty-five species of small stemless many-leaved rosettes native to Central and Southern Europe. The individual plants are mostly four to six inches in diameter but they produce numerous offsets from the leaf axils which form clusters and sometimes reach a yard or more in a solid mat.

They produce the starry pink, white, yellow and lavender flowers in dense heads in the summer, after which the flowering plant dies. They are of great interest to alpine gardeners, rock gardeners and have much to offer the succulent collector as well. They are useful in rock and wall gardens, borders, formal gardens and dish gardens.

One word of caution for the fancier in our area, however. Watch for the alkaline around the roots. If your *sempervivums* have begun to look unhealthy, pull one out and examine for alkaline. If there is evidence of alkaline use one tablespoon of epsom salts to one cup of water and wet thoroughly. Usually after this treatment there is no need to renew the soil.

Of the smaller species no one

should overlook the *S. arachnoideum* whose half-inch rosettes are densely covered with cobweb-like white hairs or the slightly larger darker green species, *S. montanum*, turf forming and known for its bright purple flowers.

Of the larger sempervivums none is more popular than *S. tectorum* var. *calcareum* whose three inch gray-green rosettes have a brown tip on each leaf or the huge six inch rosettes of *S. calcaratum* beautifully shaded with crimson and lavender highlights.

Yet another *S. tectorum*, *schottii*, a mat forming rosette with long soft leathery leaves, bluish green white at the base and red brown at the tips with bright pink flowers.

The list for collectors to choose from runs well into a hundred. They hybridize readily and one can choose from the cobwebbiest to a very brilliant ruby jewel of a plant. No other plant looks quite so well in a strawberry jar clinging to the side to show the depth of their beauty.

They are very hardy, requiring only a token of care, not too hot a location and good drainage. Plant them so that it is convenient to keep all of the dying leaves cleaned out.

Closely related to the hardy European *Sempervivum* is a species native to North Africa, the *Aeonium*. The *Aeoniums* are generally small shrubby plants with woody stems topped with saucer shaped or even flat rosettes of attractive fleshy succulent leaves. Their flowers are freely formed in late winter or early spring in huge pyramidal clusters of yellow, white, pink, red and orange.

Like other members of the *Sempervivum* family the flowering stalk of the plant usually dies after flowering but mostly they produce branches or offsets to continue growing.

Probably the best known is the *A. arborescens* which makes an erect two or three foot bushy shrub topped with light green rosettes and bright yellow flowers. One of the most common in our area is the *A. arborescens* var. *atropurpureum* which grow profusely in all of their mahogany red turning black splendor.

This plant, topped with a pyramid of yellow flowers, is a beauty to behold. This is the one seen most often in the crested form; no one knows just how it comes about.



*Sempervivum arachnoideum*

Of the low growing *aeonium* species with short stems or large single rosettes the *A. tabulaeforme* is a fine example of the single type. It makes an absolutely flat rosette a foot or more in diameter consisting of hundreds of closely imbricated green leaves.

Equally stunning is *A. canariense* whose broad, spoon-shaped leaves are covered with white velvety hairs and form a single large rosette nearly two feet in diameter. Another single one, *A. nobile*, not so commonly known, whose broad fleshy leaves of olive green form a large twenty inch rosette topped with an immense head of coppery scarlet flowers.

Some of the shrubby ones are the *A. caespitosum* with narrow green leaves striped with red and having white hairs along the edges. These form dense rosettes on stems which

close up during their resting period.

Also the *A. sedifolium*, upright type with clusters of rosettes at the end of the branch closely resembling the *A. sedum*, the *A. lindleyi* with its thick succulent leaves that hold a tablespoon of fluid used to counteract the poisonous rash contracted from handling the *Euphorbia* or other irritating cactus. It always pays to have a plant of it in the garden.

The *Aeonium* is one of the easiest of all succulents to propagate. They will put on air roots along the stems of the shrubby ones or if the flat ones are to be rooted, just cut them off, place upright on a piece of old screen wire and they will readily root. They are most rewarding for the small amount of care given them and will show their appreciation in a profusion of flowers.



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# A Calendar

of

Care

## • ROSES

- \*Look for potted bushes soon
- \*Plastic covering warms reluctant bare root plants
- \*Don't forget the mulching
- \*Follow set spray schedule

SINCE it is a little too late to buy and plant bare-root roses in the San Diego area, soon you can buy roses growing in cans at the nursery and make your selection at a time when you can also admire and evaluate the blooms.

Contrary to the opinion expressed by some, it is often better to buy potted bushes since vigorous growth is already in evidence. Several words of caution, however. Buy only five gallon cans; the smaller ones do not give enough space for adequate root growth. Some dealers pot left-over bushes which haven't sold and the growth might be weak and undernourished. Be sure that there are no dead canes and that the bud union looks healthy.

Determine the composition of the potting mixture and prepare the soil surrounding the planting hole to about the same density. A lump of clay planted in loose soil will be very difficult to water and nourish adequately and a porous ball of earth from the can placed in dense soil will create a water-logged sump inimical to plant health.

By this time all your bare-root roses should have been planted. If

the soil is well drained and the precautions mentioned in the last issue of this magazine have been observed, usually there is no trouble. Sometimes, however, in spite of everything, there will be some bushes which are reluctant to break into growth.

Try a loose plastic covering to increase the heat and humidity surrounding the canes, but if the sun is bright, allow free circulation of air to avoid over heating. Wet peat moss or similar material hilled up around the canes for several inches and kept moist, is also good. Irrigate with a very dilute solution of a liquid fertilizer, about one or two teaspoons per gallon. When growth is started, remove the protective covering gradually to allow new shoots to harden. If a new shoot does not develop green color rather

promptly, it will usually die back when uncovered.

## PLANT NUTRITION

Plant nutrition is usually considered to be a difficult subject. Really it is not complex. The ideal nutrient medium is a dilute solution containing all the essential elements. Those which need to be added to local soils are nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, calcium, iron and sulfur. The other elements needed are called trace elements and are usually present in sufficient quantity.

The best method of regular fertilizing, if you have the time and patience, is by frequent foliar feeding. Using a hose-end sprayer, apply a prepared soluble mix once every 2 or 3 days in the morning at about one-fourth the recommended concentration. If this is too frequent for you, do it about once every two weeks at recommended strength.

Do not take short cuts by mixing insecticide with the fertilizer.

There are many good liquid fertilizers on the market and one which is particularly recommended by the San Diego Rose Society is a local product—Country Squire Rose Food. This product is compounded with equal quantities of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (8-8-8) and contains other essential elements so often lacking in prepared mixtures.

Use foliar feeding on your new bushes as well as the established ones. If, in addition, you wish to use a solid fertilizer on the surface of the soil, apply this about once a month but withhold from the new plants until a month or so after the first blooming period. Try to find a fertilizer with a minimum of chloride. For the first 2 or 3 months with established bushes, it is well to use a little extra nitrogen in the form of ammonium nitrate (use with care), ammonium sulphate or ground hoof and horn. This encourages the appearance of basal shoots so necessary to prolong the life of the plant.

If you live in a high humidity area, such as right along the Coast, mulching might not be necessary but it is essential in other locations. If you haven't already mulched—get busy. Lots of water from now on will repay you with good roses, even if your soil does not drain very well. In the latter instance it is necessary to keep the salt content of the soil below dangerous limits. Nothing is better than rain but unfortunately

our otherwise beautiful climate is usually deficient in this commodity.

#### SPRAY DAILY

Having started your spray program it is important that you maintain it on a regular schedule. Acti-Dione-PM for mildew and rust and Cygon (dimethoate) systemic, with occasional use of dust for chewing insects will be adequate. Use Acti-Dione-PM at about one-fifth, or less, of the recommended strength every few days, Cygon about once every 3 or 4 weeks at recommended strength and dust when necessary. Do not mix any of these materials and do not use a spreader. For the lazy rose grower, there are all-purpose mixtures to be used every one or two weeks but better control is obtained by preventive more frequent attention.

You have by now realized that these recommendations will result in your spraying the roses practically every morning with something. This is true, but with hose-end sprayers, the job will take only a few minutes to cover any reasonable number of roses and the result will be really spectacular.

A final note concerns disbudding. Almost all roses come more than one to a stem. As soon as side buds appear they can be rubbed off very easily and the resulting single bloom will be much better for it. For show purposes, hybrid teas must be disbudded while grandifloras and floribundas should not.

Donald A. Wilson  
Vice-President,  
S. D. Rose Society

## ● BEGONIAS

- \*Crushed fir bark potting soil substitute
- \*Prepare and dry pots well
- \*Cut long, stringy stems
- \*Hardy pendant cane noted

**B**EGONIA growers should be as busy as spring house cleaners.

They lay in a good supply of light porous potting soil. Leafmold is hard to get but crushed fir bark is a good substitute. Combine with good top soil or compost, a slow acting fertilizer such as hoof-and-horn,

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and soil sulfur which maintains acidity.

If clay pots are dirty, soak overnight in water with clorox added. A brass scouring material called "Crazy Kate" is fine to scrub off the crust of lime. Rinse and dry the pots. Earth sticks to wet pots and closes the pores.

Heavy plastic pots are more useful than any others. They are light weight, dry out slowly, drain well, do not break easily and do not hold the lime deposits from the water. Tin containers are very satisfactory, except in looks.

Smooth cane begonias should have recovered from the freeze by now. They should be sending up new shoots from the ground and from joints on the branches. If stalks are crowded, cut out the old gray ones close to the ground and tip-prune the younger branches to keep them bushy.

The hirsute begonias do not grow as tall as the smooth ones but they are more bushy. They will need thinning out and a lot of good staking and tying. If these varieties are leafing out in containers that seem crowded, prune a bit and move to a larger pot.

### EXAMINE ROOTS

If much of the roots and stem portions have died back, shake the plant from the pot and examine roots for nematode knots. Discard both plants and soil if evidence is found. If not, cut out diseased portions and shift begonia to a smaller pot. Long stringy stems on low bushy begonias should be cut back to encourage new growth from the bottom.

Begonias that have enlarged root stalks growing on the surface of the soil, with fibrous roots emerging from each node or joint that touches

moist earth, are called rhizomatous (pronounced rhi-ZHOM-a-tous) begonias. Most of them have lost all or part of their leaves and are either in full bloom or just through flowering, so they are due for a rest.

### NEW LEAVES

Do not report these begonias until they send up new leaves. Be very careful not to overwater them while dormant. This applies especially to the rex-rhizomatous. When they leaf out cut back the old rhizomes that are soft or dried up and reset in shallow pots with the growing tip as far as possible from the edge of the container.

Water all plants well after potting and not again until almost dry. Keep in shaded sheltered place until they "take hold" again.

If your tuberous begonias are well-rooted and four or more inches high, set them out in the ground or in pots. Remember that the leaves point to the front. As you plant the begonias place stakes in the back so they will be ready when you need to tie up the plants. Guard against over-watering until well established. For better bloom, give plenty of light with the morning sun and afternoon shade.

### ELLEN DEE

Try hanging baskets of tuberous this year. Wire containers should be relined with fresh moss. There is a pendant cane begonia, Ellen Dee, that has proved to be quite hardy and most popular. It has bloomed all winter in several locations. See your nurserymen for some of the handsome new low-growing begonias that are so good in baskets.

When all the replanting and repotting and clean-up jobs are done you can settle down to enjoy begonias. They will need some stak-

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ing and tying, a bit of tipping back and a light feeding of acid-type food every other week. Sometimes there is mealy bug or scale, rarely aphids. A preventative spray for mildew, especially on the tuberous types, is good. Generally begonias are very easy to care for. The hardest work is trying to persuade yourself to throw away the many cuttings instead of being a slave to the thousands you will make.

**Dorothy S. Behrends**

*A. D. Robinson Begonia Society*

## ● DAHLIAS

- \*Prepare soil carefully
- \*Plant root 6-8 inches deep
- \*Keep soil damp until leaves develop well
- \*Discourage insects early

**T**HIS is the best time of the year to plant dahlias.

They may be planted until about July 1 in the coastal and foothill areas; and until about June 1 in the warmer sections inland.

Planting early means earlier blooms. Later, the blooming season will continue on until frost, or until mid-November.

Roots for planting are available at the good nurseries, from dahlia specialists, mail order houses, and, if you know them, probably from dahlia hobbyist members of the San Diego County Dahlia Society.

Many dahlia fans prefer plants to roots, but these are obtainable only from a dahlia specialist, and require a little different care.

The roots just placed haphazardly in the ground probably will grow and develop plants that will bloom. But, if they are worth planting they are worth starting off correctly.

After the bed is prepared and turned to a good gardening tilth, a one-by-one inch stake should be placed in each spot you have selected for a plant. Scoop out a hole at the base of the stake and stir into the soil a good handful of bonemeal, and then place the root, lying flat, about 6 to 8 inches deep—shallow for heavy soils.

You should have no difficulty in seeing the sprout or eye on the crown of the root; by now the good

roots will have awakened from their dormancy and started to grow. They might even have feeler roots developing on the ends or sides.

Place the eye or sprout about 2 inches from the stake, and cover the root carefully to a depth of 2 to 4 inches. If the sprout already has developed tiny leaves, let them remain above the soil enough to be able to continue to grow. As the sprout grows, fill in the hole.

(As the plant grows, tie it loosely to the stake.)

If the soil is less than damp it should be watered thoroughly and then watered only enough to prevent drying out until the plant develops a good set of leaves.

### PREVENTIVE SPRAYING

To get one up in the battle against insects, it is a good idea to do some preventive spraying as soon as you have finished planting. This should be done with a 50-50 mixture of DDT and chlordane. Cover the entire dahlia bed—the entire garden area, paths, fence lines, shrub and tree areas, in fact. Another spraying with a weaker solution of the same insecticides should follow after the dahlia plants have developed a couple

of sets of leaves.

Why? This will discourage invaders, and the residue on the soil will help guard the little plants. If the garden harbors snails or slugs, bait should be spread in the dahlia bed.

The second spraying is intended to take care of thrips and leaf miners that just love tender dahlia leaves. Afterward, a regular schedule of spraying with malathion or a good all-purpose solution should suffice until fall. A regular schedule means once every week to 10 days.

Experienced gardeners have their own methods of preventing insect damage; when they spend anywhere from \$1.50 to \$20 for one dahlia root they are not about to allow insects to mar the blooms! Some of these methods include adding a little oil spray to the solution for a continuing protection against leaf miners, adding arsenate of lead—about a tablespoon to five gallons—to trap the chewers, or adding kelthane or other miticides to discourage red spiders.

In warmer areas the gardener might not want to risk oil in his spray; if so, he might use fish emulsion to get some of the same effect,

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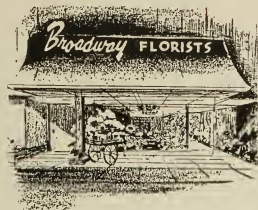
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and to apply a little foliar feeding at the same time.

Much of the fun of growing dahlias comes in developing one's own tricks, and a good way to learn the other fellow's is to get acquainted with him at the meetings of the dahlia society.

Larry Sisk  
S. D. County  
Dahlia Society

## ● CAMELLIAS

\*Water well but beware of salts

\*Fertilize for strength

\*Prune interior growth

\*April-May not too late

CAMELLIAS are deceptively easy to grow in the Southland, but judgment must be exercised and systematic care given for reasonably good to optimum results.

At this season, watering, fertilizing, and pruning command top attention.

The natural taproot of the camellia, which in the wild draws on the water and nutrient resources of ever deeper layers of soil, is substantially a casualty of the commercial production of plants in its domesticated form. It is nipped off at a very early stage in the growth of the seedling (used as root stock for grafted plants) to force lateral root growth better adapted to transplanting and container culture. Plants rooted from cuttings never have a taproot. The result is that nearly all camellias start off with a shallow root system and thus require frequent watering and considerable topsoil enrichment for some years.

Potting mixes, which move into garden intact with the root ball, range from silt and clay to blends of sand and humus, the latter generally being comprised of peat moss, rice hulls, or leafmold. Water retention properties and percolation rates

differ widely.

Camellias do best in well aerated soil, yet are easily injured by water stress, thus the soil should never be allowed to dry out. Frequency of watering must be governed by the moisture-retaining properties of the soil and the weather encountered.

In the coastal region, for plantings in friable soil comprised of about one-third sandy loam, one-third peat moss, and one-third oak leafmold, or equivalent, deep watering once a week is usually adequate. Inland, summer watering should be stepped up to two or three times per week.

### BEWARE SALTS

Water percolates readily through a light soil mix such as described and it is difficult to overwater so long as good subsoil drainage exists. The latter permits periodic leaching of the rootbed area to preclude a build-up of harmful salts, a major hazard in the Southwest.

Colorado River water delivered in much of Southern California is "good enough" for Johnny to drink, but too salty to meet government specifications for high-grade concrete. It has a pH of 8.77, well on the alkaline side. The slightly acid soil that camellias prefer is best maintained by rain water, but irrigation water will suffice if the root zone is leached of accumulated salts from time to time.

Next in importance to watering is the desirability of fertilizing to promote good spring growth. It is this new wood, which when hardened off in summer (through storage of starches and sugars), that will produce next season's best blooms.

Cottonseed meal and the balanced commercial products offered as Camellia-Azalea food are recommended. The latter usually contain chelated trace elements helpful in combating chlorosis. Most experienced growers fertilize about three times during the growing season, starting off at the end of the blooming season and following up with a second and third application at six to eight-week intervals. The trend

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is to use a balanced commercial product for the year's initial application, then to use cottonseed meal for the second and third round. If a mulch of compost or leafmold is added, both of which are fair sources of organic nutrients, cut the fertilizer application recommended on the package by about one-third.

#### PRUNING HINTS

Pruning or shaping of plants should be done for best results before the spring flush of new growth, but April and May are not too late if this chore was neglected in March.

Remove completely any interior twiggy growth shaded by outer foliage. This thinning out allows better air circulation, light penetration, and more food to reach the most productive wood.

Additional pruning may be done to invigorate a plant, to keep it

within bounds, or to shape it.

Cutting back laterals and the thinning out of side growth reduces the growing points of a plant, thus channeling more food to those remaining. When shortening growth, make the cut at a leaf node, preferably where a growth bud is evident. This last is desirable with Japonicas, but especially important in the case of reticulata camellias which set a minimum of inside growth buds and initiate very few adventitious buds.

Plants may be topped to stimulate more bushy growth or to establish a height limit, but care must be exercised in this to assure a shapely plant with reasonable top foliage rather than an unsightly stump and considerable interior wood exposed to sun scald.

Clive Pillsbury

*S. D. Camellia Society*

## BOOK TOURS

Conducted by Alice W. Heyneman

**Garden Pinks.** By Roy Genders. St. Martin's Press, New York, 1962. (Printed in Great Britain.) 160 pages. \$5.95.

Although New York is given as place of publication of these two books by Roy Genders, this is a technicality only; no garden books could possibly be more English, and the cultural directions and even the phraseology are devotedly aimed at the British gardener. This makes for delightful—if not 100 per cent practical—reading, and this book on Pinks is particularly charming.

Somehow it seems to me that English gardens have always given more emphasis to the growing of pinks than their American counterparts do; there has always been a special enthusiasm reserved for this flower in the old garden books. I suspect that we, in California, have never done the pink justice; not, certainly if the literal hundreds of listings, complete with delightfully fanciful names and descriptions, in this little book is a fair guide.

There are many pictures, too—but the five color photographs by John Gledhill are outstandingly alluring, and the sixth, on the dust wrapper, is best of all. Twenty-nine other photographs, plus line drawings, are included. This is not just a picture book—even though the pictures are enough to make pink growers of us all.

Soils, propagation, arrangement in borders, exhibiting, marketing, and the special care incident to growing in boxes or tubs are all enthusiastically taken up in turn, as are the uses of pinks between paving slabs or blooming in cracks in a dry wall. And of course the always necessary subject of pests and diseases (they don't seem to be subject to very many!) is competently dealt with.

Names of many of the varieties are descriptive and delightful; there are Freckles (salmon pink flecked with red), London Poppet (semi-double white and ruby), Seamew (pale pink and crimson), and Belinda (strawberry, zoned with maroon). There are actually several hundred of these named varieties, quite a number of them several years old, and there are categories into which they fit: the Allwoodii, the Garden Pinks, the Laced and Show Pinks, new hybrids, and more.

It is plain that here is a garden subject that will bear more investigation; a good way to start is with a delightful book like this one of Mr. Genders.

**Colour All The Year Round.** By Roy Genders. St. Martin's Press, New York, 1963. 287 pages. \$5.95.

"Colour All The Year Round" carries the subtitle, "A Complete

Handbook For The Small Flower Garden." If one narrows this a little to the *English* flower garden—for which it is specifically intended—then this is fair enough, for it covers an incredibly wide area of ornamental plant material.

It opens with a comprehensive discussion of trees, shrubs and hedges, mainly from the standpoint of color and of appearance in the garden. Cultural problems are not entirely omitted, but far more attention is given to the more scenic ones of brilliance, height, and time of blooming.

In the chapter on roses, culture, soils and pruning are of necessity given more importance, but lists and descriptions are extensive. (It is interesting to note that a great many of our most popular recent roses are not mentioned.)

Chapters on winter plants, spring bloomers, hardy annuals, and summer and autumn color follow, with reference to bedding plants as well as to the use of bulbs, climbers, and "rockery" plants.

The great English herbaceous border is given its due importance which is wonderful to read about even though it is so difficult to maintain in Southern California. Here it is in all its glory with charts, photographs and height and color lists. One yearns to try it just once more!

Mr. Genders's book is extremely well organized; plant materials—and I have hardly hinted at how many there are—are all listed and described in their proper divisions and categories. It is all logical, and certainly comprehensive. Illustrations, mostly from photographs, while not particularly numerous or spectacular, are adequate and informative and there is a good index.

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Dear Editor:

I believe you are in error on the names of the plants on the back cover of your Feb.-March 1963 *California Garden* magazine. It is possible for me to be wrong, not being acquainted with the location of the picture, but I am quite sure the plants are not *Dracaena* Palms and Guadalupe Palms. The plants as I see them are *Yucca brevifolia* or *valida* and the hesper palm *Erythea Brandegeei*.

Respectfully,  
ROBERT H. NELSON  
P. O. Box 771  
San Ysidro, Cal.

### A Correction

By Chauncey I. Jerabek

It just seems that not one of us is perfect; we all make mistakes now and then. Some one did just that in naming the plants on the back cover of the February-March issue of *California Garden*.

Mr. Robert H. Nelson, of San Ysidro, in reading through this issue, noticed this mistake. Sometimes we do not like to be reminded of our errors, but when people read the magazine so carefully that they see our faults, we know that they are not merely skimming through the pages, therefore we wish to thank Mr. Nelson for bringing this to our attention.

The palms that can be seen in the picture are *Erythea Brandegeei*, sometimes called the "San Jose Hesper Palm," a native of the southern part of Lower California. The specific name was given for Townsend S. Brandegee, horticulturist, 1843-1925.

If anyone is interested in seeing these palms first hand, go to Balboa Park. The original group, in a small canyon northeast of the Bowling Green contained more than a hundred specimens. Mr. Fred Bode, who was the horticulturist for the 1935-1936 Exposition, transplanted two into the patio of the House of Hospitality, and one east of the Philippine cottage in the House of Pacific Relations Group. Several years later I had five brought to the corner, south of the Craft Center in the Palisades area of the park. Two others in the city are at the south-

west corner at 7441 Olivetta, La Jolla; and on the northwest corner of Louisiana and Howard in Normal Heights.

For a good illustration, see the cover of the Spring, 1959 issue of *California Garden*.

The other plants are *Samuela carnerosiana*, a native of the Carnerosa Pass in northeastern Mexico. Many refer to this as *Yucca australis*. They could be correct, but I think they are one and the same. In its native country it is called "Palma samondoca," but in Southern California, we refer to it as the date-yucca.

Miss K. O. Sessions planted these in the western part of Balboa Park. From this group, with the help of

some good WPA men, I transplanted eight specimens of various sizes to the aloe and agave garden. Two were branched, the rest were single trunked. I also moved several to the Cove at La Jolla near the steps. Frank Taylor, the general foreman, transplanted one to the patio of the Police Department, at the foot of Market Street.

I marvel that the weight of these tall tree trunks, arching out into space, does not snap off the whole tree or uproot it.

For a detailed illustration showing the inflorescence, and a more detailed description, see the Golden Jubilee number of the *California Garden*, Autumn, 1959.



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